

Roman Catholic, managers found it impossible to collect voluntarily the heavy sums required to make their schools fit for twentieth century children, the way out was to " crush them out of existence, and have one uniform Board School system, with undenominational Christian teaching " His rejection of this is significant The common, uninformed view of the natural Webb reaction to such a problem would be that he would be all for uniformity, for a neat scheme and for the elimination of nonsense, and possibly pernicious nonsense at that, like Catholic or Anglican or Jewish denominational instruction Not at all Genuinely impassioned for education, genuinely tolerant of different views from his own, what he was concerned to secure was the utmost variety and flexibility in educational system, consistent with the attainment of a reasonably high standard He also believed strongly in and desired freedom for all parents, however poor they might be, in regard to an item which seemed to them of cardinal importance, whatever it might seem to him He was against intolerance, under whatever name it might masquerade against the cut-and-dried imposition of certain views, whatever they might be As he wrote in *The Nineteenth Century*, in 1901,

"One party has backed denominational schools, and has only grudgingly admitted the need for Board Schools The other party, with at least equal intolerance, has backed Board Schools, and only grudgingly allowed Denominational Schools to exist The result of this sectarian and unsectarian narrowness, and of

the incapacity of the Education Department
itself, is that after
a whole generation of nominal compulsion, we are
still only at
the beginning of the task. Over at least a third of
England, the training of the teachers, the scope and
content of the
curriculum, and even the attendance of the
children are so in-
ferior as to amount to a national scandal, whilst
only in the
picked samples of a few towns do we rise to the
common level of
Switzerland "

He faced the denominational issue (although
possibly, at
the time, he underrated the intensity of feeling
it engendered)